

NEWS



Peace... It's Wonderful, Colonel Says

By ROBERT C. RUARK

WE were talking to other day about some of the inequities of the treatment of the reserve officers by the armed forces and another aspect which needs a little fresh scrutiny is the mandatory retirement of commissioned reservists after 20 years' service.

I have in hand a letter from a just-retired lieutenant colonel—not the chaplain of whom I wrote—which offers a viewpoint more clearly than I could possibly do it myself. We will herewith give Col. G. of San Francisco his head.

"I do not intend to beat the drum for a life of indolence for retired officers. The point is, however, that at the time the average military man is entering his period of greatest value to his organization and consequently of greatest earning capacity, the 20-year reservist is patted lightly on the back, handed a piece of paper that says he has been a good boy and told to go out and compete with the current crop of eager young college graduates in finding a job commensurate with his age, his social position and not least of all his dignity.

NO DOORS

"And, since we are not all Eisenhowers, MacArthurs, Lucius Clays, nor Walter Bedell Smiths, the civilian business world does not throw open its doors and offer us hundred-thousand-dollar jobs.

"I don't blame industry. The real tragedy is the loss to the United States Army of the years of experience and ability which have been developed. The average officer spends his first 10 years learning how to be an officer, acquiring the military viewpoint, learning the ropes and having his errors caught and explained. The next 10 are spent acquiring rank experience and confidence—in developing his particular metier and his level of capability. His remaining years constitute his military *raison d'être* (justification).

"It's a one-sided relationship that is practically peonage. The army can release the reservist at its own pleasure but the reservist

cannot get out without the Army's o.k. Well, I'm out now. I retired a year ago as a lieutenant colonel under the arbitrary 20-year retirement policy. And I wouldn't go back for eagles.

EASIER

"For the first time in my life I am working only 40 hours per week. No O. D. No parades. No formations. No responsibilities for lives or million of dollars of government property. No sweating out efficiency reports.

"I am buying a home and have a feeling of security and well-being that I never knew existed. I can plan ahead. I'm not afraid of being released from my job. Peace, it's wonderful.

I think you may agree that the colonel has a case.